

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, July 5, 1804 ,
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Leicester Ford.**

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE. J. MSS. (JAMES MADISON.)

July 5, 04.

We did not collect the sense of our brethren the other day by regular questions, but as far as I could understand from what was said, it appeared to be,—1. That an acknowledgment of our right to the Perdido, is a *sine qua non*, and no price to be given for it. 2. No absolute & perpetual relinquishment of right is to [be] made of the country East of the Rio Bravo del Norte even in exchange for Florida. (I am not quite sure that this was the opinion of all.) It would be better to lengthen the term of years to any definite degree than to cede in perpetuity. 3. That a country may be laid off within which no further settlement shall be made by either party for a given time, say thirty years. This country to be from the North river eastwardly towards the Rio Colorado, or even to, but not beyond the Mexican or Sabine river. To whatever river it be extended, it might from its' source run N. W., as the most eligible direction; but a due north line would produce no restraint that we should feel in 20 years. This relinquishment, & 2 millions of Dollars, to be the price of all the Floridas East of the Perdido, or to be apportioned to whatever part they will cede.

But on entering into conferences, both parties should agree that, during their continuance, neither should strengthen their situation between the Iberville, Missipi & Perdido, nor interrupt the navigation of the rivers therein. If they will not give such an order instantly, they should be told that we have for peace sake only, forborne till they could have time to give such an order, but that as soon as we receive notice of their refusal to give the

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order we shall enter into the exercise of our right of navigating the Mobile, & protect it, and increase our force there *pari passu* with them.¹

¹ On the following day, Jefferson wrote to Madison:

“In conversation with Mr. Gallatin yesterday as to what might be deemed the result of our Tuesday's conferences, he seemed to have understood the former opinion as not changed, to wit, that for the Floridas East of the Perdido might be given not only the 2. millions of dollars and a margin to remain unsettled, but an absolute relinquishment from the North river to the Bay of St. Bernard and Colorado river. This however I think should be the last part of the price yielded, and only for an entire cession of the Floridas, not for a part only.”